

MARINE SAFETY BULLETIN

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Continued Al-Queda Threats abroad and in the Homeland

ATTENTION: Federal Departments and Agencies, Homeland Security Advisors, First Responders and Security Managers, Maritime, Chemical and Energy Information Sharing Analysis Centers

OVERVIEW

This is a joint DHS and FBI Advisory

(U) DHS intends to update this Advisory should it receive additional relevant information, including information provided to it by the user community. Based on this notification, no change to the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) level is anticipated; the current HSAS level is YELLOW.

(FOUO) The Intelligence Community (IC) remains concerned about information indicating imminent terrorist attacks against U.S. interests abroad. However, the Intelligence Community cannot rule out attacks in the U.S.

(FOUO) This Advisory is intended to raise the security awareness of the recipients based on this new information. It is expected that recipients will act to ensure that the vulnerabilities outlined in this advisory are given serious consideration, and remediation steps are appropriately instituted. **Private Sector recipients are instructed to contact the Homeland Security Operations Center before forwarding outside of their security department.**

DETAILS

(FOUO) Recent public proclamations regarding Al-Qaeda's potential intentions during Ramadan (26 October-24 November) to conduct attacks against US interests both abroad and in the Homeland are likely intended to build a justification for major attacks.

(FOUO) On 1 November, a London-based Saudi opposition organization posted an internet message from a suspected Al-Qaeda propagandist, warning of near-term operations against the US, and instructed Muslims in Washington DC, New York, and Los Angeles to leave immediately in lieu of such pending attacks. The same organization has periodically posted messages purportedly from Al-Qaeda representatives that put forth similar anti-US threats.

(FOUO) Usama bin Ladin (UBL) has issued more general pronouncements about Al-Qaeda's continued intentions to strike the Homeland and to fight "Crusader" forces worldwide. In mid-October, audiotapes initially aired by al-Jazeera contained warnings—apparently issued by UBL—in which he claimed Al-Qaeda's would continue suicide attacks both in and outside the US.

(FOUO) While it is difficult to assess the veracity of these public warnings, we remain concerned about Al-Qaeda's continued efforts to plan multiple attacks against the US and US interests overseas. We believe most of the recent information regarding Al-Qaeda's planned operations point to imminent attacks against US interests in the Arabian Peninsula, but we are also concerned about several unresolved threat streams indicating Al-Qaeda is planning attacks against the US homeland including:

- (FOUO) Al-Qaeda may be planning to attack US nuclear and chemical facilities using commercial cargo planes loaded with explosives during Ramadan (26 October-24 November 2003). The flights would originate outside the US and preparations for the attacks may be underway.
- (FOUO) Additionally, Al-Qaeda continues to express interest in attacking critical infrastructure targets in the US because of the potentially significant economic and psychological impact associated with such attacks. Attacking critical infrastructure targets such as nuclear facilities, bridges, dams, water reservoirs, petrochemical sites and major population centers could be carried out by a variety of means.
- (FOUO) As far as we are aware, Al-Qaeda to date has not executed a successful terrorist attack using any chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) materials. However, the acquisition, production, or theft of these materials and subsequent dissemination is a top Al-Qaeda objective. We believe Al-Qaeda remains intent on using CBRN materials in attacks on the homeland, although we have little information indicating they possess the operational capability for mass-casualty, high-impact operations.

SUGGESTED PROTECTIVE MEASURES

(FOUO) For NRC regulated facilities: Where facilities are regulated by the NRC, follow those actions approved by the NRC corresponding to HSAS level YELLOW with special attention to actions related to aircraft threats. Please review your suspicious flight activity reporting procedures.

General Protective Measures:

(FOUO) Recommended protective measures for owners and operators, security managers, and where appropriate, state and local government entities:

- Encourage personnel to be alert and immediately report any situation that appears to constitute a threat or suspicious activity.
- Rearrange exterior vehicles barriers, traffic cones, and road blocks to alter traffic patterns near facilities.
- Institute/increase visible vehicle, foot and roving security patrols varying in size, timing and routes.
- Implement random security guard shift changes.
- Arrange for law enforcement vehicles to be parked near entrances and exits.
- Limit the number of access points and strictly enforce access control procedures.
- Approach all illegally parked vehicles in and around facilities, question drivers and direct them to move immediately. If an owner can not be identified, have vehicle towed by law enforcement.
- Increase perimeter lighting.

- Deploy visible security cameras and motion sensors.
- Review security camera footage daily to detect for possible indicators of preoperational surveillance.
- Remove vegetation in and around perimeters and maintain regularly.
- Institute a robust vehicle inspection program to include checking under the undercarriage of vehicles, under the hood, and in the trunk. Provide vehicle inspection training to security personnel.
- Deploy explosive detection devices and explosives detection canine teams.
- Conduct vulnerability studies focusing on physical security, structural engineering, infrastructure engineering, power, water, and air infiltration - if feasible.

Aviation:

(FOUO) Operators of all-cargo aircraft may consider the following:

- Verify identity of all individuals allowed near or on aircraft.
- Search all aircraft prior to loading of cargo to ensure no unauthorized persons are on board.
- Do not transport persons not required for the safe operations of the flight.
- Search all cargo capable of concealing individuals (cargo weighing over 100 lbs.)—pay particular attention to cargo that has unusual holes or openings that may have been installed to allow free flow of air.
- Secure unattended aircraft to prevent unauthorized use.
- Verify the identification of crew and passengers prior to departure.
- Verify that baggage and cargo are known to the persons on board.
- Direct increased vigilance to unknown persons—as well as unknown service/delivery personnel.
- Be aware/alert of persons loitering in the vicinity of aircraft or air operations areas – as well as persons loading unusual or unauthorized payload onto aircraft.

(FOUO) Airlines are encouraged to continue the same level of vigilance in following security procedures and should review Homeland Security Advisories, dated 26 July 2003, on Potential Al-Qaeda Hijacking Plot in the US and abroad, 8 August 2003, on the Threat of Nitrocellulose Stuffed Items, and 5 August 2003, on Use of Common Electronic Items as Improvised Weapons.

Maritime:

(FOUO) Public and private owners of maritime vessels and facilities may consider the following:

- Maritime operations in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf and Western Indian Ocean should pay particular attention to suspicious activity while in transit and dock side.
- Review Vessel Security Plans
- Monitor Restricted Areas
- Control Access to the Vessel
- Monitor deck areas and areas surrounding the vessel
- Implement security lookouts and/or security patrols to ensure continuous monitoring
- Perform waterside boat patrols to ensure continuous monitoring
- Use divers to inspect the underwater pier structures associated with vessel birthing and loading/unloading operations, including piers, docks, moles, POL dolphins, etc, prior to vessel arrival and upon vessel's arrival, and in other situations where deemed appropriate.
- Control the embarkation of person and their effects
- Supervise the handling of cargo, vessel stores, and bunkers

Threats against Soft Targets

Recent mass-casualty attacks in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Iraq used car bombs against hotels and housing compounds, suggesting that “soft” targets with minimum physical security measures could be viewed as attractive options in the US.

Previous attacks underscore Al-Qaeda’s ability to employ suicide bombers – a tactic which can be used against soft targets and VIP’s. Terrorists will employ novel methods to artfully conceal suicide devices. Male bombers may dress as females in order to discourage scrutiny. Al-Qaeda operative Richard Reid employed a novel and unique “shoe bomb” device in an attempt to destroy a transcontinental airliner in December 2001. Reference Department of Homeland Security Information Bulletin, *Security Threats Posed by Suicide/Homicide Bombers*, May 7, 2003.

All recipients of this bulletin are encouraged to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to local law enforcement and the Marine Safety Office at (504) 589-6261 or the National Response center via the 24-hour telephone number at 1-800-424-8802.